

## Message Text

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DRAFTED BY:S/S-O JHOGANSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE SENT TO SECSTATE INFO AMMAN BEIRUT  
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SUBJECT: MARGALIT ARTICLES ON SECRETARY'S ALLEGED VIEWS RE  
SYRIA/ISRAEL NEGOTIATIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: MARGALIT (HAARETZ) STORIES ON ALLEGED  
REMARKS BY SECRETARY IN CLOSED BRIEFINGS RE ISRAELI LEADER-  
SHIP AND NEXT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA HAVE PROVOKED  
CABINET DISCUSSION, DENIAL BY PRIME MINISTER, AND  
INITIAL CRITICAL EDITORIAL COMMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN TWO SEPARATE FRONTPAGE STORIES SEPTEMBER 21, HAARETZ  
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT MARGALIT REPORTS ON ALLEGED REMARKS  
BY SECRETARY IN CLOSED BRIEFING REGARDING NEXT STAGE OF  
NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA. ACCORDING TO MARGALIT, SECRETARY  
REPORTEDLY SAID THAT INTERIM SYRIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT COULD  
BE ACHIEVED ON BASIS OF THREE KILOMETER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON  
GOLAN HEIGHTS. IN SAME CLOSED SESSION, SECRETARY REPORTEDLY  
SAID THAT SYRIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS WILL BEGIN AT THE END OF  
OCTOBER AND IN ANY CASE BEFORE DECISIVE PERIOD IN LATE  
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NOVEMBER WHEN SYRIA WILL HAVE TO DECIDE ON FURTHER  
EXTENSION OF UNDOF.

3. IN ADDITION TO THESE COMMENTS ON NEGOTIATING ISSUES,

MARGALIT ALSO REFERS TO ALLEGED COMMENTS BY SECRETARY CHARACTERIZING ISRAELI LEADERSHIP, AND ATTRIBUTES THESE CITATIONS TO UNIDENTIFIED SOURCE WHO ATTENDED CLOSED SESSIONS. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF THESE EXCERPTS. BEGIN EXCERPTS: "YITZHAK RABIN IS A LEADER WHO LACKS COLOR, BUT HE HAS PROVED HIMSELF TO HAVE MORE ABILITY THAN I THOUGHT," SAID DR. KISSINGER IN HIS CLOSED BACKGROUND BRIEFING...HE PRAISED YITZHAK RABIN AND SHIMON PERES. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, "HE DID NOT HAVE MANY GOOD THINGS TO SAY ABOUT YIGAL ALLON." ...END EXCERPTS. KISSINGER REPORTEDLY ALSO DISCUSSED HIS VIEWS OF SADAT AS WELL AS SENATORS HUMPHREY AND JACKSON IN SAME SESSION.

4. MARGALIT STORIES WERE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AT SEPTEMBER 21 CABINET MEETING AT END OF WHICH GOVERNMENT ISSUED OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE NOTING THAT PRIME MINISTER HAD ANSWERED QUESTIONS RAISED BY MINISTERS GALILI AND YASCOBI. FOLLOWING IS RELEVANT SECTION FROM COMMUNIQUE: BEGIN TEXT THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED

AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE FACTS, AS THEY APPEARED IN THE VARIOUS MEDIA, DO NOT REPRESENT A DIRECT QUOTATION OF STATEMENTS MADE BY THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE. THEY REPRESENT REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. FURTHERMORE, THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS INSTRUCTED THE ISRAEL EMBASSY TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THESE STATEMENTS WERE IN FACT MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

B. WITH REGARD TO EVALUATIONS OF PERSONALITIES IN ISRAEL- THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION IN THE CABINET.

C. WITH REGARD TO THE ISSUE OF AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE HAD MADE NO SUCH PROPOSAL TO HIM, AND THAT NO REFERENCE HAD BEEN MADE TO IT. END TEXT

5. IN FIRST EDITORIAL COMMENT, HAARETZ SEPTEMBER 22 NOTES THAT, IF WASHINGTON REPORTS ARE ACCURATE, SECRETARY IS DOING DAMAGE TO ISRAEL EVEN WHEN THERE IS NO NEED TO DO SO. THERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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IS NO CLEARER SIGN OF CHANGE WHICH HAS OCCURRED IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL THAN THIS KIND OF SEMI-PUBLIC POSITION TRYING TO DETERMINE IN ADVANCE WHAT OUGHT TO BE TIMING AND SUBSTANCE OF NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS. THESE STATEMENTS ARE NOT NEUTRAL, AND WILL ENCOURAGE SYRIA TO REGARD THREE KILOMETER WITHDRAWAL AS ASSURED FROM THE OUTSET. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY SECRETARY HAS DONE THIS BUT, IN ANY CASE, IT DOES NOT BRING PEACE IN THE AREA ANY NEARER.

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